

JOSEPH MAURER—THE TECH

Bruno B.F. Faviero '15, a Tech staffer, tops a newly constructed snowman with a hat on Monday evening in front of the Student Center. Light snowfall blanketed Cambridge on Monday evening.

‘Manic Sages’ steal the show!

Mystery Hunt 2012 concludes when hidden Tony is found

By Janelle Mansfield

STAFF REPORTER

On Friday the 13th, hundreds of students, alumni, and puzzle enthusiasts gathered anxiously in Lobby 7. At noon, the members of the 33 teams

INSIDE

Check out the Mystery hunt photos!

p. 11

that came to compete in the 2012 Mystery Hunt were greeted by two familiar characters: the infamous Max and Leo from 1968 Mel Brooks film *The Producers*. The two introduced the premise of the hunt, which is an MIT annual puzzling event that dates back to 1980.

Keeping with Mystery Hunt tradition, this year’s hunt was planned by the winning team of last year’s Hunt — “Codex.” The hunt was themed around show business, and prominently featured Max and Leo from *The Producers*. The hunt commenced at noon on Friday and concluded on Saturday at 10:27 p.m. The winning team, “Manic Sages,” solved a series of showbiz-themed puzzles to discover the location of the “coin” — whichever team reaches the



JOHN A. HAWKINSON—THE TECH

Mystery Hunt participants gather in Lobby 7 last Friday at noon to receive instructions before they begin solving puzzles. They learned that the theme of this year’s hunt is making bad Broadway musicals, based on the plot of *The Producers*. The puzzles were created and organized by Borbonicus and Bodley, winners of last year’s Mystery Hunt.

Mystery, Page 12

Are student more stressed these days?

Enrolled Student Survey sheds light on the state of the student body

By Janelle Mansfield

STAFF REPORTER

The 2011 Enrolled Student Survey, which was conducted this past spring, polled undergraduates about extracurricular and academic activities, and underscored an apparent increase in student stress. About 65 percent of the undergraduate body responded to the online questionnaire, which is delivered every four years.

According to the survey, MIT students are generally happy and taking advantage of campus opportunities, despite high levels of stress. The online survey is taken every four years during the spring, and all undergraduates are invited to participate. In addition to academics and extracurriculars, it

has questions regarding demographic info, overall well-being, and how their skills and abilities have changed since entering MIT.

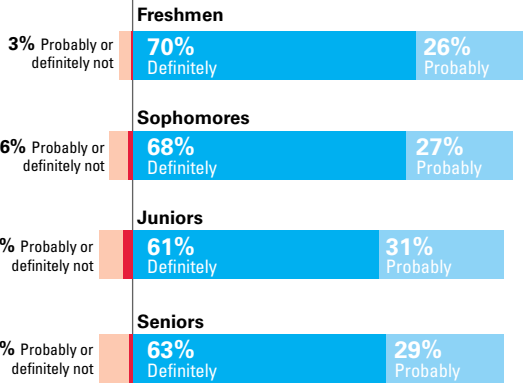
Ninety-four percent of surveyed students agreed that they would choose to go to MIT if they had the chance to do it all over again. Eighty percent of all undergraduates also felt confident in their ability to succeed at MIT. Seniors in particular were very confident, showing that perhaps students gain confidence as they progress through MIT. Ninety-six percent of students rated their experience at MIT as good or excellent.

At the same time, however, the percentage of students who report feeling overwhelmed “very often” has risen from 18 percent in 2007 to 25 percent in 2011. Alan E. Siegel, director of Mental Health Services, said that the amount of students that come

Survey, Page 9

If you could start all over again, would you go to MIT?

This was a question on the recently released MIT Enrolled Students Survey. For more of the survey results, see **Page 10**



INFOGRAPHIC BY CONNOR KIRSCHBAUM—THE TECH

MIT Institute Professor Emeritus wins Enrico Fermi Award

Last week President Obama named Mildred S. Dresselhaus, emeritus institute professor of physics and electrical engineering and computer science, and Burton Richter ’52, emeritus professor in the physical sciences at Stanford, as this year’s winners of the Enrico Fermi Award. The award is given “to encourage excellence in research in energy science and technology benefiting mankind,” according to its description. Established in 1956 to honor the accomplishments of 1938 physics Nobel Laureate Enrico Fermi, the award carries a gold medal and an honorarium of \$50,000, shared equally by its recipients.

For the past 50 year at MIT and the Lincoln Laboratory, Dresselhaus contributed extensive research that led to fundamental understandings in the field of condensed matter physics. Her research group has drawn much attention for its work in the areas of carbon nanotubes, bismuth nanowires, and low dimension thermoelectricity.

Dresselhaus has served in numerous scientific leadership roles, including as President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Treasurer of the US National Academy of Sciences, President of the American Physical Society, and Chair of the Governing Board of the American Institute of Physics. Her other accolades include the U.S. National Medal of Science and 23 honorary doctorates worldwide.

According to the MIT News Office, outside the laboratory, Dresselhaus is widely known for her commitment to mentoring students, especially as a mentor and advocate for women in science.

Fermi award, Page 12

IN SHORT

6.002, Circuits and Electronics, will have a pilot section for MITx next term, going by 6.002x. For more information about MITx check <http://mitx.mit.edu/>.

The first IS&T Student Town Meeting will be held today from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in 32-155. Students are welcome to come and discuss printing, scanning, athena clusters, and other IS&T issues at MIT.

All continuing students must finish pre-registration by tomorrow! Or face an \$85 fine.

Send news information and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.

Early action numbers fall

Potentially caused by other renewed EA programs

By Jaya Narain

STAFF REPORTER

When asked about the decline in the number of early applications for MIT — down 4.7 percent from last year — Dean of Admissions Stuart Schmill ’86 hypothesized that the decrease was likely caused by the reinstitution of early application programs at several other universities this year.

“One thing that is certainly true is that because Harvard and Princeton went back to their early pool,” Schmill said, “that was probably one of the reasons the number of our early action applicants went down.”

Harvard and Princeton both established single-choice early action (SCEA) programs for this admissions cycle, after discontinuing other early application programs in 2006. Like MIT’s early action program, SCEA is nonbinding; the difference is that applicants who apply to Princeton or Harvard under SCEA may not apply early to any other private institutions.

680 of 6,008 early applicants, or 11.3 percent of

applicants, were admitted to the Class of 2016 in mid-December. This marks a slight decrease from last year’s early acceptance rate of 12.1 percent and a small increase from the 10.3 early-action admit percentage for the class of 2014.

But, because of greater variety of early application options, Schmill said that the applicants who chose to apply to MIT early were very well-suited for the school. “The students who applied early to us were clearly very well focused on MIT and really strong matches to our culture and community, which made the choices particularly hard this year,” he said.

The number of applicants admitted through MIT’s early action program varies with the predicted distribution of applicants between the early and regular cycles.

“Our intent is to somewhat mirror the way the applicants come in — meaning that if a third or half of our applicants come in early, we would look to enroll that many from that cycle,” Schmill said.

Admissions, Page 9

DO COMPANIES CHECK FACEBOOK?

Chacha, our new advice columnist, has the answer.

CAMPUS LIFE, p. 14

THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARIES

Does Santorum have a chance?

OPINION, p. 5

STAYING IN STASIS

Coming to terms with growing up.

CAMPUS LIFE, p. 15



BUT THEN I TOOK AN ARROW TO THE KNEE

Does *Skyrim* live up to the hype? **ARTS, p. 19**

THE INTERNET GOES DARK

Websites shut down to protest SOPA and PIPA. **NEWS, p. 16**

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Keep praying, Santorum

Bible-belting bad boy doesn't stand a chance against the Romney Goliath

By Andy Liang
ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR

I'm glad to see that none of the critics took the recently released movie, *Machine-Gun Preacher*, seriously. The premise of the movie is, "You may not fear God, but you best fear Sam Childers." Sam Childers, played by Gerard Butler, is the ex-con turned missionary turned warrior-of-God, finding himself in war-torn Sudan, saving orphans from warlords by gunning them down with AK-47s, Rambo-style. Had the director been Sylvester Stallone, or even Quentin Tarantino, I'd know what to expect: an action-packed movie of odd with crazy wrapped in great. But *Machine-Gun Preacher* takes itself seriously in its mission to save African children, unfortunately, through the eyes of a Spartan muscleman. The movie's contexts of somber Sudan, and style of Yosemite Sam-showdown, disagree, making the film a recipe for a wreck.

Butler's holy mess for a film parallels Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum's holy mess of a campaign. The former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania has adopted a take-no-prisoners evangelical approach to his campaign. Santorum's plat-

form runs on trumpeting “family values,” halting abortion practices, interrupting gay marriages, and stopping Obama’s class warfare. He believes that “America is a moral enterprise, not an economic enterprise,” in rebuke of Mitt Romney’s businessman appeal and Romney’s super PAC’s “Restore the Future” support. What Santorum lacks in business experience, he makes up for in Machine-Gun Preaching:

“The idea that the Crusades and the fight of Christendom against Islam is somehow an aggression on our part is absolutely anti-historical. And that is what the perception is by the American Left who hates Christendom... What I’m talking about is on-ward American soldiers. What we’re talking about are core American values.” This was said at the Oakbrook Preparatory School in Spartanburg, South Carolina to 200-plus students.

Santorum's devotion to his Christendom seeks to win sideline support from socially conservative voters, especially in South Carolina, where evangelicals account for 60 percent of the Republican primary vote. Indeed his tough church-boy act has curried favor from the Carolinians. In Mount Pleasant, SC, he raised "over \$3 million in

a week.” For Santorum, South Carolina will be the make-it or break-it state. Since 1980, winners of the South Carolina’s primaries have gone on to capture the Republican nominations. Thus the predictions of the Republican race will weigh on the Palmetto State (SC) primary. If Mitt Romney were to win the Ames Straw poll (IO), the New Castle Straw Poll (NH), and the Palmetto State primary, which no one has ever done before, “it should be over” (as commented by R. Sen. Lindsay Graham on “Meet the Press”). Regardless of whether Santorum can pass the stepping stone that is South Carolina, he will probably sink when it comes time for the Republican National Convention

Santorum's success so far has come from endorsements from evangelical leaders. Back in the Iowa caucus, Santorum managed a surprise capture of second place to Romney, behind by only eight votes, because of strong backing by religious voters. In Texas, 150 social conservatives represented by the Family Research Council agreed to support Santorum over native Texan candidate, Rick Perry. Indeed there have been times when the light was shining on Santorum.

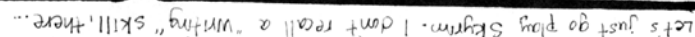
But pockets of churchgoers are not

enough to carry the tide of support within Santorum's campaign. Republicans are looking for a guide through the financial and healthcare problem, not the moral crisis (there is none). The U.S. national debt is at \$15 trillion; the unemployment rate is at 8.5 percent; this year, states are expected to spend 7.4 percent on healthcare coverage; tensions with the Middle East are escalating. However, at the top of Santorum's Family, Faith, and Freedom home-page, is his stance on pro-life issues. Although the issues of abortions rights are not inconsequential, they are not the national issue to address. Thus Santorum shows no promise as a political leader because he is a spiritual leader — his beliefs reside in the church.

Indeed, this Machine-Gun Preacher in fuzzy cashmere sweater-vests has had good runnings in the political boxing ring. But I see the same demise in him as I saw in Jon Huntsman — the falling-out. Had Santorum not taken his mission-for-God campaign so seriously and instead focus on the bigger issues, he might have appealed to a wider audience. His overall campaign had what I would call the “Gerard Butler effect”: the man may not understand his demographics, but he sure knows his Bible.

OPINION OPINION OPINION OPINION





Solution, page 12

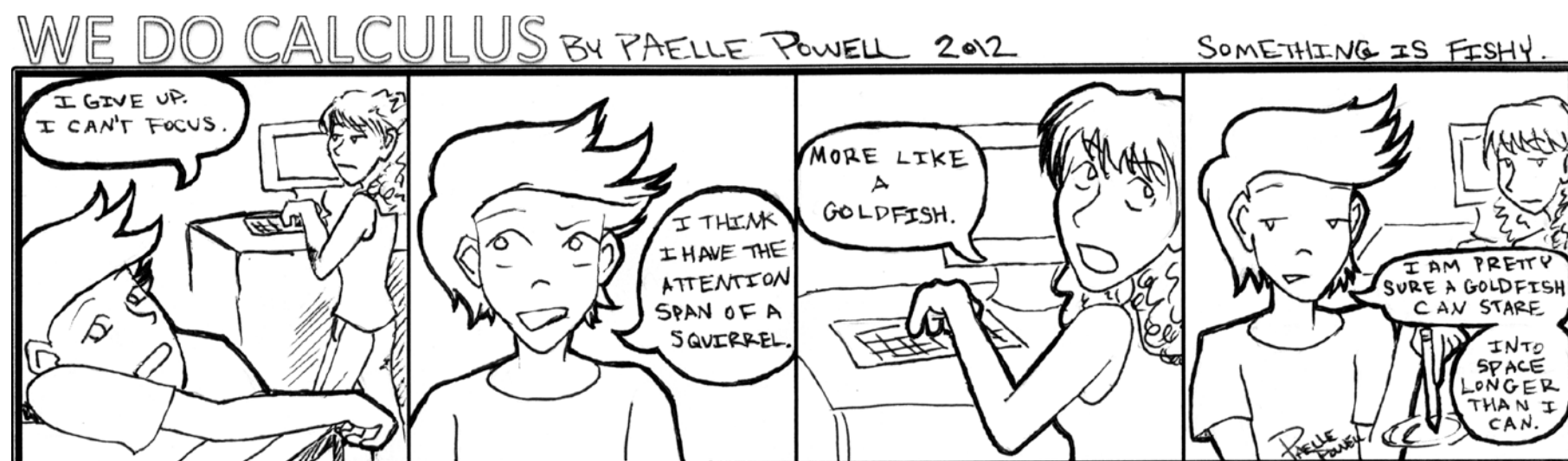
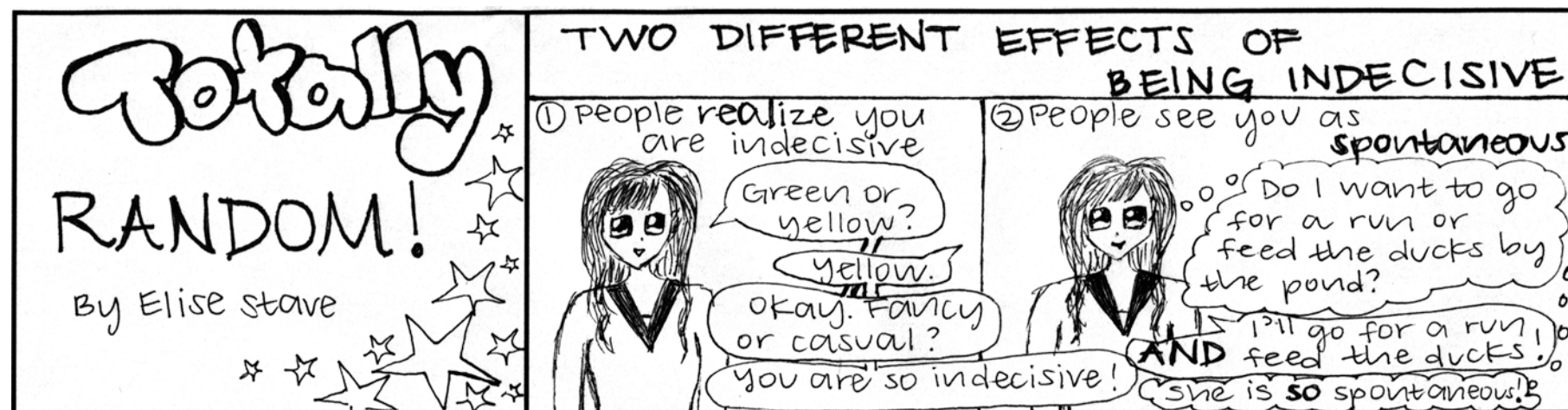
						8		
9				7	6	2		
6	1	2		5	8	4		
4			5					7
	9						4	
5					1			2
		3	6	9		1	2	4
		9	2	1				5
		4						

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Solution, page 12

12x		120x			2
	3÷			15x	
11+	480x			5x	
			6x		12x
	12+			2	
5		24x			6

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

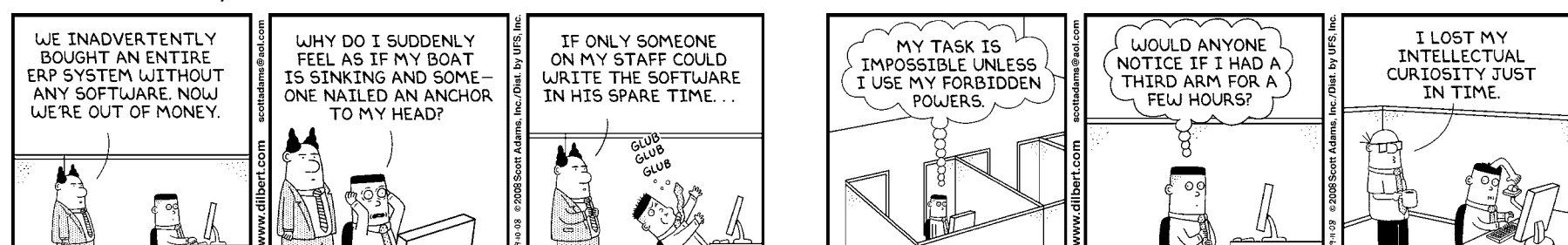


by Jorge Cham



www.dhdcomics.com

Dilbert by Scott Adams



Stumper Crossword Puzzle

by Lester Ruff

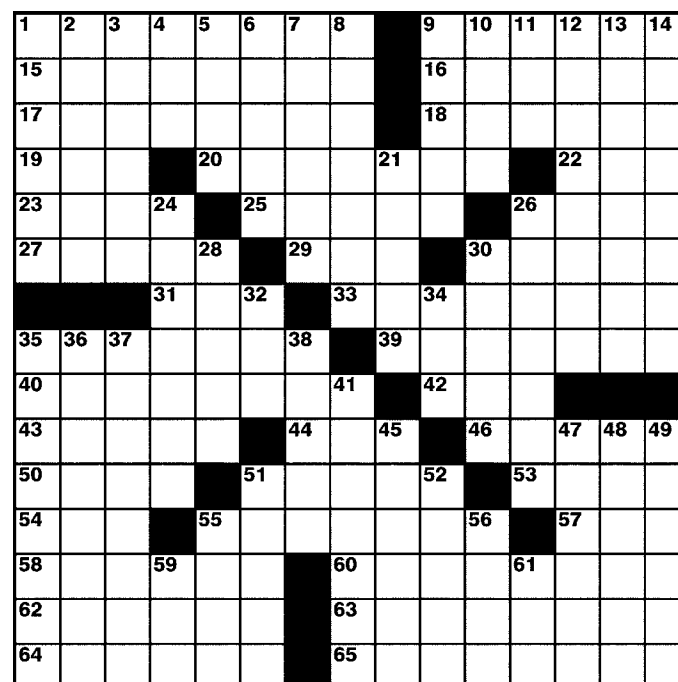
Solution, page 9

ACROSS

- 1 For quite a while
- 9 Museo de América locale
- 15 World's largest volcano by volume
- 16 Swindle
- 17 Call from a cage
- 18 Break in the proceedings
- 19 Onetime major news-photo source
- 20 1776 character
- 22 Pick
- 23 On the way
- 25 Word on mazes
- 26 Toon bruin
- 27 Stock-market stats
- 29 Shakespearean preposition
- 30 Worries
- 31 Ruling source
- 33 Article starter
- 35 One of Victoria's titles
- 39 Picks
- 40 That's Not All, Folks! autobiographer
- 42 Teriyaki option
- 43 Rule material
- 44 Big name in electricity

- 46 Disney's follow-up to
Dumbo
- 50 Still-life subject
- 51 Walk (on)
- 53 Cordial
- 54 Paid pitches
- 55 British toast
- 57 Sort of break
- 58 Western predator
- 60 Spumoni alternative
- 62 Poles are found there
- 63 Broadcasting now
- 64 Sort of plain
- 65 Give up
- DOWN**
- 1 Western plot element
- 2 Asian capital
- 3 Drawing in
- 4 Outcome
- 5 Its Web site has an Ozone
Resource Page
- 6 Shapeless masses
- 7 Marquee time
- 8 Drawn
- 9 Excellence
- 10 Ice Age novelist

- 11 Century-ending year
12 Subject taught by Aristotle
13 Federal job
14 Won't go anywhere near
21 Tracts
24 Whom a humor-writing
prize is named for
26 Gerald Ford alma mater
28 Common sense
30 Star
32 Free TV spot
34 Shape of some office
desks
35 Gaps in typography
36 Dealt
37 It's fun
38 Result of soft-palate
vibration
41 Cornmeal product
45 Place for slips
47 Zealot
48 Word on São Paulo
stamps
49 Foul
51 Semicircular canal count
per ear
52 Foul



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 55 British sluggard of the comics | 59 DC designation |
| 56 Where Lost was filmed | 61 Target audience for Shave magazine |

The 5th Annual MIT Hummus Experience



**Thursday, January 19, 2012
12-1p | Building 10 - Bush Room**

Vote for the best home-made hummus at MIT. Help choose the best hummus at MIT's annual "made from scratch" hummus taste-off! Participate in a blind tasting of hummus made by fellow students. Be dazzled by the variations in flavor and texture. We promise free hummus and pita, give aways, and much more.

Fewer early applicants means stronger matches

Despite the decline in numbers this year, admissions staff still excited to admit new class

Admissions, from Page 1

Because there were less early applications this year, less students were admitted through the early action program. Schmill said that the admissions office intends to enroll 35 to 40 percent of the incoming class through early action. Schmill is generally pleased with the breadth of applications that MIT receives. “I think we get a very large portion of the really talented students from around the country certainly who are interested in science and engineering and technology,” he said. Schmill added that he realizes

that MIT might miss some students who might be well suited for MIT but do not apply because their backgrounds are such that they do not have “the same kind guidance, where there are people around them who are pointing them towards MIT.” Schmill explained that there are outreach programs designed to target these students, but that “we don’t try to recruit students who we don’t think will have a reasonable chance of being admitted. We’re not interested in simply increasing our application numbers just for the sake of it.” The total number of applications received — 6,102 — (which

includes withdrawn and incomplete applications) marks a 4.7 percent decline from last year’s high of 6,405 applications. Still, Schmill stated that “this year’s admissions cycle was really tough because the applicants we got were uniformly excellent. Despite the fact that the total number of early applicants went down just a bit, the fact that we’re only admitting such a small percentage of the total makes it as tough as ever.” This level of competition has been consistent over the last few years, and Schmill said that he is very happy about how the class is thus far “I’m very excited about

the students we’ve admitted. ... I’m just excited about the fact that we’re going to have another really awesome class join us in the fall.” In a blog entry he posted after the release of decisions, admissions officer Chris Peterson wrote that “[the admitted students] represent some of the best and brightest stars of our future. We are honored to welcome them to campus, where they will join the similarly accomplished, diverse, generally excellent community of students who already call MIT home.” Schmill mentioned that he was also impressed by the 1,308 applicants (21.8 percent) who were

not admitted and the 3,731 applicants (62.1 percent) who were deferred. “I am always, and maybe even more so this year, amazed at the strength of the students who we weren’t able to admit and who we’ve deferred and are now in the regular action pool,” he said “Many of these are extremely strong and talented students who we will wind up admitting in March.” The remainder of the class of 2016 will be admitted through the regular action cycle in March. No information on the regular action cycle is currently available. “The dust hasn’t quite settled on that yet,” Schmill said.

Despite stress, students still satisfied with MIT

Enrolled Student Survey shows that MIT does get better before you graduate

Survey, from Page 1

to “walk-in hours” (held weekdays 2–4 p.m.) “increased by more than 60 percent [this year].” “The average number of students seen each day doubled from past years ... my personal experience and that of my colleagues on staff is that MIT students do feel more stress and distress than in previous years,” Siegel said. The reason behind the increase in stress is hard to pinpoint. MIT students evaluated several sources of stress, and reported managing course workload as the most stressful, followed by concerns about future plans, balancing multiple commitments, difficulty of curriculum, personal/relationship problems, and financial worries, in that order. With so many commitments and

a difficult course load contributing to student stress, time management is always a challenge for MIT students. The survey also polled students on what they do in their time outside the classroom and how they balance their schedules. **Students develop better relationships with faculty as the years go by, and GPAs increase.** **Student activity outside of class** The average MIT student spends, weekly; 6–10 hours working, 21–25 hours studying or doing homework, and 0–5 hours exercising or playing sports. Fourteen percent of students

reported zero hours of physical activity a week. Half of MIT students have done community service in their free time as well. Seventy-four percent of seniors surveyed had done research with a professor, while the same amount of freshmen plan to do so. While most students fulfill their plans of doing research, only about half of those who plan to study abroad actually end up doing so. Fifty-two percent of freshmen say they plan to study abroad, but only 24 percent of seniors reported that they had. Dr. J. Chapell H. Lawson, Director of MISTI, attributes this disparity to complicated schedules. He advises students to plan ahead if they’re serious about studying abroad. “The earlier students start thinking about their schedules, the more opportunities they will have open to them,” Lawson said.

Besides being able to do research or study abroad, MIT students seem to benefit from their education here. Ninety-eight percent of seniors agreed that MIT had increased their knowledge of a specific field by at least some amount, and 95 percent felt that their experience here had increased their knowledge and career-related skills. The survey also showed that students develop better relationships with faculty as the years go by, and their GPAs generally increase as well. Seniors reported the most A’s out of all the classes, and freshmen the most C’s. More seniors also felt they knew more faculty well enough to ask for a letter of recommendation, demonstrating that students get to know professors better over the years. Although the Student Survey

revealed MIT can be stressful, the results also show students gain confidence and experience during their time here, and participate in a variety of activities outside the classroom. The full results of the survey are available online at <http://web.mit.edu/ir/surveys/enrolled.html>. **Solution to Crossword** *from page 7*

A	T	L	E	N	G	T	H	M	A	D	R	I	D
M	A	U	N	A	L	O	A	E	U	C	H	R	E
B	I	R	D	S	O	N	G	R	E	C	E	S	S
U	P	I	A	B	I	G	A	I	L	T	A	P	
S	E	N	T	S	T	A	R	T	Y	O	G	I	
H	I	G	H	S	E	R	E	C	A	R	E	S	
		U	M	P		D	A	T	E	L	I	N	E
E	M	P	R	E	S	S	E	L	E	C	T	S	
M	E	L	B	L	A	N	C		E	E	L		
S	T	E	E	L		O	H	M		B	A	M	B
P	E	A	R		T	R	E	A	D		W	A	R
A	D	S		C	H	E	E	R	I	O		N	A
C	O	U	G	A	R		T	I	R	A	M	I	S
E	U	R	O	P	E		O	N	T	H	E	A	I
S	T	E	P	P	E		S	A	Y	U	N	C	L



Source: xkcd.com

Do you want to be a cyber security expert who keeps ACTUAL attacks against the CIA (and other government agencies) from happening?

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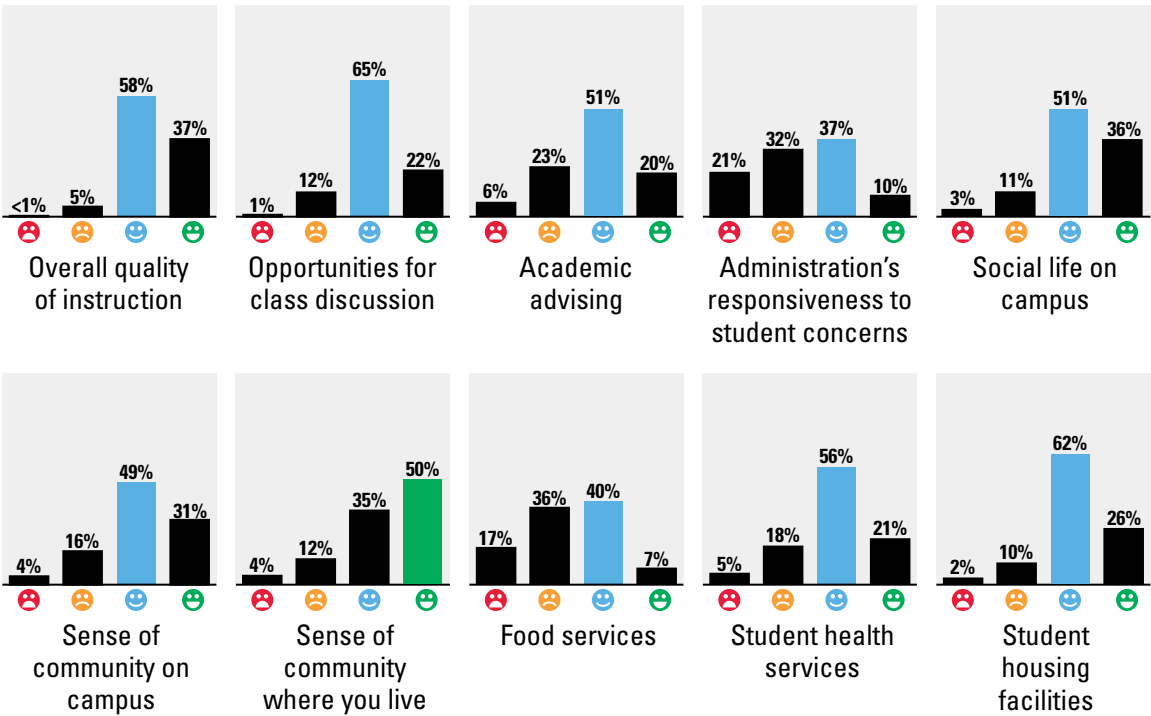
Scholarships are available for U.S. citizens with
education or experience in computers and an interest in cyber security.
See www.seas.gwu.edu/cybercorps for details. The deadline is January 31, 2012, so apply now!

A quick look at the...

MIT Enrolled Student Survey

Data taken from 2011 Enrolled Student Survey, which can be found online at <http://web.mit.edu/ir/surveys/enrolled.html>. 65 percent of undergraduate students responded to the survey.

93% of MIT students rated their entire educational experience as **good** or **excellent**



- 35%** often pull all-nighters
- 57%** often feel overwhelmed by all they have to do
- 60%** often feel they aren't as accomplished as some of their classmates
- 85%** only rarely or occasionally feel like they don't fit in

INFOGRAPHIC BY CONNOR KIRSCHBAUM—THE TECH

Embryonic stem cell research challenged, again

Sherley continues stem cell debate with an appeal to a panel of judges for the third time

By John A. Hawkinson
STAFF REPORTER

James L. Sherley has filed the first brief of his formal appeal in his battle to stop government funding of human embryonic stem cell research.

Sherley is the adult stem cell researcher who left MIT under a cloud in 2006. He was denied tenure in the Department of Biological Engineering in 2004, and then alleged the denial was racially motivated. After repeated appeals of his tenure decision, he staged a hunger strike in the spring term of 2006 and subsequently left the Institute. He is now a researcher at the Boston Biomedical Research Institute in Watertown, Mass.

Sherley has been battling the National Institutes of Health in federal courts in Washington D.C. over the legality of their funding since August 2009.

The core issue is that federal law prohibits government funding of “research in which a human embryo or embryos are destroyed,” which is known as the

Dickey-Wicker amendment. Does use of existing human embryonic stem cell (hESC) lines constitute research where embryos are destroyed, or is the prior destruction of embryos separate research?

Sherley and his co-plaintiff, Theresa A. Deisher, argue that it is the same research, and thus barred by Dickey-Wicker. The NIH, of course, disagrees. The court briefs have spent many pages debating the definition of the word “research” with countless citations to dictionary definitions and the like.

Sherley’s 96-page brief renews much of the same arguments as before: first, that present-day research is the same research that destroyed embryos; and second, that the NIH promulgated its guidelines for hESC research in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act.

Sherley’s first case, in 2009, was before the D.C. district court. The court dismissed the case, saying that Sherley and Deisher lacked standing to sue, because they were not actually harmed by the NIH’s policy. Sherley appealed that decision to the D.C. Court of Appeals, which supported him, saying that his potential loss of grant funding was sufficient to merit the suit, and sent the case back to the District Court. This was in June 2010.

The district court then issued a preliminary injunction in favor of Sherley, momentarily causing researchers, at MIT and elsewhere, to wonder whether they could continue to do their work. The injunction also disrupted the NIH grant process, preventing the NIH from making funding decisions on upcoming hESC research proposals.

The NIH appealed the preliminary injunction to the same appeals court, but to a different

Sherley’s appeal before the appeals court will be heard by yet another randomly-selected three-judge panel.

randomly-assigned three-judge panel. That panel ruled in favor of the NIH, by a two-to-one vote, vacating the preliminary injunction and once again sending the case back to the district court.

Finally, in September of 2011, the district court ruled against Sherley and in favor of the NIH.

What’s different this time?

Sherley’s appeal before the appeals court will be heard by yet another randomly-selected three-judge panel, the third to hear the case. This panel includes Karen L. Henderson, who was the dissenting vote in favor of Sherley when the injunction was vacated, and Janice R. Brown, who was on the first panel that unanimously concluded that Sherley had standing.

The district court’s decision in favor of the NIH gave strong deference to the appeals court’s decision vacating the earlier injunction. In that decision, the appeal’s court concluded that the word “research” in Dickey-Wicker was sufficiently flexible as to permit the NIH’s judgement. Sherley will be arguing against that prior decision by the appeals court.

Administrative Procedures Act

The second prong of Sherley’s argument is that the NIH violated the Administrative Procedures Act when it distributed guidelines on the funding of hESC research. The NIH, Sherley said, “was required to consider and respond to relevant comments, including 30,000 comments addressing whether human embryonic stem-cell research meets the criteria for federal funding.”

At the district court phase, the NIH argued that they were not required to consider comments about whether to fund hESC research, merely comments about how to fund it. The court agreed.

Remaining schedule

The NIH will file its brief on Feb. 27, Sherley may file a reply brief by March 12, and the case will be argued on March 23. The court is likely to decide the case this calendar year.

**WE'RE SEEKING TO BUILD
OUR FORCES**

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SOURCE: FLICKR USER MADPRIME

1	
	2
3	4
5	6

1) **Participants gather at the Mystery Hunt Wrap-Up** in 26-100 on Sunday evening. The Hunt ended when the coin was found in little Kresge at 10:27pm on Saturday. On stage, from left to right: Josh Ain, C. Scott Ananian, Francis Heaney, Patrick Blindauer, Xavier C. Jackson '12, Kevin Carde, and Barack Michener.

2) **A team performs a show after solving several puzzles.** The performances are necessary to advance in this year's Mystery Hunt.

3) **Members of the hosting team, "Borbonicus and Bodley"** present on plinths during the opening ceremony in Lobby 7 on Friday.

4) **The team "Death From Above"** works to solve puzzles. They placed 12th overall.

5) **Members from the team "Freshman 15"** work in Building 34 to solve puzzles Saturday evening. Each team has a headquarters in separate bases located throughout MIT.

6) **Francis Heaney poses as Leo Bodley**, one of reappearing characters in the year's hunt.



SOURCE: FLICKR USER MADPRIME



JOHN A. HAWKINSON—THE TECH



DAVID GREENSPAN



JANELLE MANSFIELD—THE TECH



SOURCE: FLICKR USER MADPRIME

Mystery Hunt 2012 proves to be a spectacular show

33 teams compete in events and solve puzzles for a chance to create next year's hunt

Mystery, from Page 1

coin first claims victory This year's coin was a Tony Award, which was hidden in Little Kresge.

A Tony Award, the highest accolade given to a stage production, served as the final prize this year because of the *Producers* premise for the entire hunt. Upon their return, Max and Leo planned to produce six more terrible musicals with the help of the hunters. These plays comprised the first part of the hunt — but it didn't end there. Just as it happened in *The Producers*, the plays designed to flop became wildly successful. In the final round of the hunt, Max and Leo decided to produce one more hit. This play, unlike the others, became a huge disaster. In order to redeem their play, Max and Leo decided to steal a Tony Award for it. Thus, the hunters' final assignment was to find the

location of that Tony, which was hidden somewhere on campus.

The annual tradition of Mystery Hunt was started by MIT student Bradley Schaefer '78 in 1980. The objective is to solve a series of puzzles and encrypted messages to finally find a hidden object. This year, the structure centered around six different plays and six theater critics. Teams solved puzzles specific to each critic and play, as well as meta-puzzles, which require answers from previous puzzles to be solved, and meta-meta puzzles, which needed all the meta puzzle answers. The winning team's prize is to design the next year's hunt.

There were also several events hosted during the hunt, which teams could attend in order to earn Bupkis, a type of currency that could be used to purchase clue answers during the hunt. One such event was "I'm Wet! I'm Hys-

terical and I'm Wet!" which was a pool party held at the Alumni Pool in Stata. Two members from each team were invited to attend, and were surprised by a pool full of rubber ducks. Each duck had markings on its bottom — revealing a giant, wet version of the popular card game Set. One member from each team participated at a time and had to collaborate with other teams to create a set of three rubber ducks. Other events included a cocktail mixer titled "Bringing Stars Together," and a Name that Show Tune competition.

Teams came from all over the world to participate in the Mystery Hunt. Some teams were made up of MIT students and alums, others of puzzle enthusiasts from around the world. "Manic Sages," the winning team, was comprised of about 150 members and is affiliated with Mathcamp and the Experimental

Study Group at MIT.

This year marked the first hunt for a number of teams. "The Freshman 15," made up of about 25 freshmen, most of whom knew each other from the Discover Electrical Engineering and Computer Science pre-orientation program, greatly enjoyed their first hunt despite the fact that they were facing much larger teams. Team leader Joanna K. So '15 said that as members of a smaller team they had "more satisfaction because you had a greater input" in solving puzzles.

However, facing bigger and more experienced teams "is frustrating sometimes," said Jennifer B. Tilton '15, but the group agreed their team had "a lot of promise." They plan to enter again next year with more members.

One of the larger, veteran teams in the hunt was "Too Big To Fail," estimated to have between

100–150 members. Too Big To Fail has competed in every hunt since 1996, and has written the hunt before as well. In teams of this size, competing in the hunt is a mixture of recruiting new members — "we're very open to people joining," said one MIT alumni member — and using their familiarity with the hunt to become more efficient and prepared for each hunt. Too Big To Fail finished fourth in this year's competition.

No matter the size or success of the teams, all enjoyed putting their minds to the test to solve some challenging puzzles. Puzzle hunters can look forward to next year's hunt, which promises to be just as mind-boggling as this one. Statistics about each team's progress during the hunt can be found online at http://web.mit.edu/puzzle/www/12/memos_from_the_management/solving_statistics/.

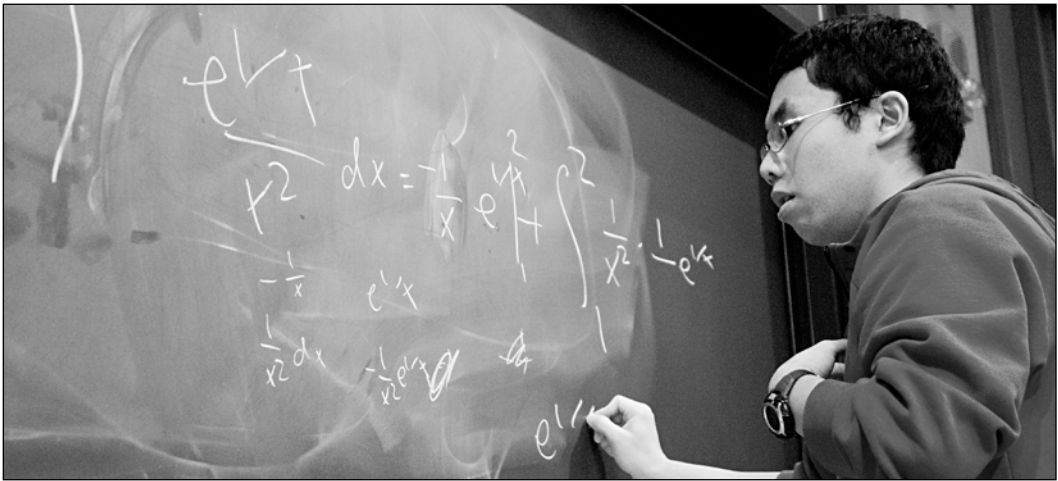
Fermi award, from Page 1

Richter was selected based on his work on electron-positron colliders, his leadership as director of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, and his national and international contributions in energy policy, according to the official award

citation.

U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu will present the award to Dresselhaus and Richter in Washington on a later date. For more information on Dresselhaus and her research, check her faculty website at http://web.mit.edu/physics/people/faculty/dresselhaus_mildred.html.

—Adisa Kruayatidee



Carl F. Lian '15 competes in the first round of the Integration Bee tournament, held in 10-250 yesterday evening. In order to advance, two opponents race to solve two integrals displayed on a projector above. The winner, Justin T. Brereton '13, was crowned the "Grand Integrator."

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Solution to Sudoku
from page 6

3	7	5	4	2	9	8	6	1
9	4	8	1	7	6	2	5	3
6	1	2	3	5	8	4	7	9
4	3	6	5	8	2	9	1	7
2	9	1	7	6	3	5	4	8
5	8	7	9	4	1	6	3	2
8	5	3	6	9	7	1	2	4
7	6	9	2	1	4	3	8	5
1	2	4	8	3	5	7	9	6

Solution to Techdoku
from page 6

1	3	4	5	6	2
4	6	1	2	3	5
6	2	3	4	5	1
2	4	5	6	1	3
3	5	6	1	2	4
5	1	2	3	4	6

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Police Log

The following incidents were reported by the Campus Police between Oct. 20, 2011 and Dec. 21, 2011. The dates below reflect the dates the incidents occurred. This information is compiled from the Campus Police's crime log. The report does not include alarms, general service calls, or incidents not reported to the dispatcher.

May 7 West Campus 10:30 a.m., Past report of rape.

Jun 1 Bldg. E23 (25 Carlton St.) 7:00 a.m., Equipment was stolen from construction area. Report taken.

Jun 1 Bldg. W84 (Tang Hall, 550 Memorial Dr.) 7:00 a.m., Suspect of crime bulletin turned himself in. Arrest of Daniel Gora, 44 Grampin Way, Dorchester MA, charged with assault and battery, and breaking and entering. (Assault and battery case on 12/11/2011).

Oct 4 Bldg. W89 (Campus Police, 291 Vassar St.) 8:21 a.m., Report of a past rape by person known to victim. Occurred on the west half of campus in a dormitory.

Oct 7 Bldg. 8 (21 Ames St.) 1:00 p.m., Tools were stolen. Dispatched west car officer to take report.

Oct 20 Bldg. W61 (MacGregor House, 450 Memorial Dr.) 6:01 p.m., Larceny of bicycle, sector four handles report.

Oct 20 Theta Chi (528 Beacon St.) 7:17 a.m., Breaking and entering reported. Laptop computer stolen.

Oct 20 Bldg. W85 (Westgate, 540 Memorial Dr.) 11:47 p.m., Unwanted person. Person identified and issued trespass warning.

Oct 21 Bldg. W13 (Bexley Hall, 52 Massachusetts Ave.) Past larceny of a bicycle from Bexley courtyard.

Oct 21 Bldg. W20 (Student Center, 84 Massachusetts Ave.) 3:51 a.m., Car 281 stops subject in the Student Center. Jeffrey Mottley, no fixed address (homeless) arrested for trespassing on third floor.

Oct 21 Bldg. W20 (Student Center, 84 Massachusetts Ave.) 6:39 a.m., Car 281 conducts a field stop W20. Trespass warning issued.

Oct 21 Bldg. E52 (50 Memorial Dr.) 1:44 p.m., Reporting party found a used condom in office and the office was secured. Dispatched sector 1.

Oct 21 Bldg. 54 (21 Ames St.) 2:00 p.m., Bike was stolen. Report taken.

Oct 21 Bldg. 8 (21 Ames St.) 4:21 p.m., Report of suspicious activity. Sector 3 takes report.

Oct 21 Bldg. E19 (400 Main St.) 10:08 p.m., Report of suspicious person, stopped and ID'd as a homeless alumnus.

Oct 23 Bldg. W4 (McCormick Hall, 320 Memorial Dr.) 2:53 a.m., Vehicle which appeared to be a Safe Ride van was stopped, ID'd and issued trespass warning. The operator was charging \$5.00 and Safe Ride is free.

Oct 23 Bldg. 13 (105 Rear Massachusetts Ave.) 3:36 p.m., Sector 3 takes report from person who states that the laptop was left in an unlocked room for "one minute" and was stolen.

Oct 24 Bldg. W71 (Next House, 500 Memorial Dr.) 4:26 p.m., Bike stolen from Next House area.

Oct 25 Bldg. W20 (Student Center, 84 Massachusetts Ave.) 12:00 p.m., Larceny of handbag and laptop computer.

Oct 27 Bldg. W7 (Baker House, 362 Memorial Dr.) 5:57 p.m., Victim reports black male placed a handgun to his back and took his

laptop and cell phone on the fifth floor.

Oct 28 Bldg. 2 (182 Memorial Dr.) 8:00 a.m., Report of suspicious activity.

Oct 28 Bldg. E38 (292 Main St.) 11:13 a.m., Larceny of backpack.

Oct 28 Bldg. 37 (70 Vassar St.) 12:00 p.m., Larceny of cell phone.

Oct 28 Bldg. E52 (50 Memorial Dr.) 2:44 p.m., Larceny of money from wallet.

Oct 28 Bldg. 14 (160 Memorial Dr.) 2:46 p.m., On second floor, report of a black male in his 40s, white backpack, no teeth, soliciting money from students. Check on subject revealed two default warrants. Atiba R. Nedd, 6 Weld Road, Boston MA, taken into custody on outstanding warrants.

Oct 28 Off campus 3:05 p.m., Report of fraudulent use of an account.

Oct 28 Bldg. NW86 (Sidney Pacific, 70 Pacific St.) 5:58 p.m., Vandalism to motor vehicle. Dispatched west car.

Oct 28 Bldg. 7 (77 Massachusetts Ave.) 6:47 p.m., Report that a white male, possibly Hispanic, wearing a blue fleece, blue jeans, and black nylon string backpack, attempted to steal a laptop. Victim got the laptop back from the suspect, who then left the area. Officers dispatched.

Oct 28 Bldg. 1 (33 Massachusetts Ave.) 7:35 p.m., Reporting party states his laptop was stolen. Dispatched east car.

Oct 29 Bldg. E55 (Eastgate, 60 Wadsworth St.) 12:57 p.m., Past domestic incident in Eastgate, loud discussion.

Oct 29 Bldg. W70 (New House, 471 Memorial Dr.) 1:06 p.m., Fire alarm. West car and Cambridge Fire responded to scene. Cause of alarm was actual fire in toaster. No damage.

Oct 29 Bldg. 6 (182 Memorial Dr.) 1:34 p.m., Report unknown person in office. Male fled with bag after being confronted. Sector three, west car, and east car respond to area. Officers check area for intruder and unable to locate.

Oct 29 Delta Kappa Epsilon (403 Memorial Dr.) 11:13 p.m., Cambridge Police Depart-

ment reports they are responding for a call regarding a fight. Arrest of Jonathan Mande, 68 Boylston St., Brookline MA, for breaking and entry nighttime and assault and battery.

Oct 29 Phi Delta Theta (97 Bay State Rd.) 11:34 p.m., Boston Police issued violations to house.

Oct 30 Theta Xi (64 Bay State

Rd.) 12:33 a.m., Boston Police issued violations to house.

Oct 30 Bldg. W61 (MacGregor House, 450 Memorial Dr.) 7:07 a.m., Officers respond on possible domestic disturbance. Loud argument, reports a verbal warning was given.

Oct 30 Bldg. W1 (Maseeh Hall, 305 Memorial Dr.) 8:00 a.m., Vic-

tim reports the theft of his bike.

Oct 30 Bldg. W70 (New House, 471 Memorial Dr.) 8:36 a.m., Report of a suspicious person. Checks out okay.

Oct 30 Bldg. E14 (75 Amherst St.) 8:00 p.m., Victim reports threatening voicemail.

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Hello students of MIT! Let me introduce *The Tech's* new advice column, written by yours truly, Chacha. In the future, I'd love to respond to your requests, so go ahead and email your questions (about anything!) to askchacha@the-tech.mit.edu. As for now, here is my advice on how clean your social network should be for potential employers.

Clearly, for one of the three former status updates an employer would probably go “d’awwww” and like it, while for the other two they would think “hmm ... ” and place your application at the bottom of the stack.

According to an article by the *New York Times*, Harris Interactive conducted a study for CareerBuilder.com asking 2,667 managers and human resource workers whether or not their companies check social network sites. They found that 45 percent of employers said they check social networks in deciding on a potential employee and 35 percent decided not to offer a job because of material they discovered. What did they find that they didn't like? Provocative pictures and references to drinking and drugs were said to be "red flags," which makes sense. Once a company hires you, the people you interact with associate you with your company. As an employee, you are essentially a walking billboard. What greater way to advertise than to choose employees who will accurately represent your company's goals? So, commenting on that awesome frozen yogurt place you found near that awesome pizza parlor is cool. But mentioning how sick you were this morning with a previous status from the night before about a "sick" party you were going to is probably not so hot.

To summarize:

- 1) Companies may or may not invade your life and look at your Facebook. Be smart about what you post, especially pictures. Don't forget about ones posted by friends! To read more about this issue, check the article by the *New York Times*: <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/20/more-employers-use-social-networks-to-check-out-applicants/>
- 2) Go and check your actual security settings. You might be surprised.
- 3) Once things go on the internet, they never go back. So really, don't be dumb (see 1).

Fondly,

Chacha

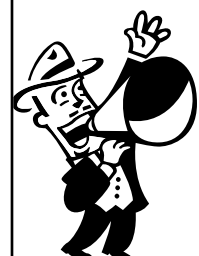
Some companies say they do not make it a practice to check Facebook.

But 45% of employers say they check social networks when deciding on hires.

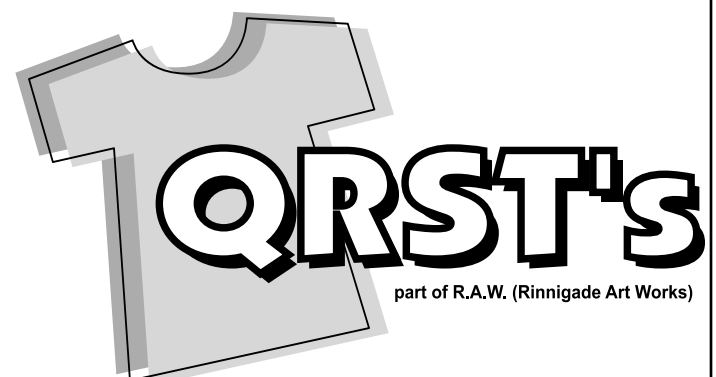
Provocative pictures and references to drinking & drugs are red flags.

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NERDY WITH A CHANCE OF RANDOM

Letting the stream of life flow unimpeded

Ruminations on the need for mental maturity

By Amanda Aparicio

ASSOCIATE CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR

This past year, I turned twenty. Biologically speaking, I would not dispute that my body had matured into an “adult.” However, if you had asked me last year, I would have told you that I felt as if I had yet to leave the “teen” state of mind. The concept of going into adulthood, of gaining more responsibility, of acting more mature — if anyone even knows what that entails — repulsed me more than water does a hydrophobic molecule. I didn’t want to grow up, and while I could do nothing to slow the biological process, I could mentally dig my heels into the ground and refuse my newfound title of “young adult.”

After having discussed my overbearing hesitancy, it might not come as a surprise that I still did not feel as if I was a college student last year. Instead, my experiences seemed to be caught in some strange limbo between high school and college. Whenever I would hear that someone was in college — college! — I imagined a completely different lifestyle: going out to party on the weekends, going to the grocery store sans parents, tak-

ing care of finances, cell phone bills, and doctor appointments without the helping and sometimes nagging voice of a mom. And even though I discovered I could manage the bare minimum needed to survive, doing any more than what was needed would push me beyond the fine line between a teen and an adult — a point of no return where one heads towards a career, a family, and a huge block of responsibility. There was no way I was having that.

My experiences seemed to be caught in some strange limbo between high school and college.

But my whole outlook changed when I went home for the break this year.

It was the morning of New Year’s Day, and the sun had just begun to peak its head above the horizon. Unable to sleep, I ventured out of my house and found our gigantic, white,

reliable dog Maggie snoozing on the front porch. Feeling a bit reflective and acting on impulse, I sat down by Maggie and just watched as the sun lazily crept its way up the sky. A new year had begun, the year of 2012. But what did this mean? Even if it sounds like crazy superstition, what if the doomsayers were right and the world would end in December? Would I be satisfied with my life so far? What had I learned? What had I accomplished? Where did I stand? Where did I want to be if I only had one year left? On the other hand, how does anyone know how much time they have? However obvious it may be, nobody can escape from mortality.

So then, what had I been doing with my life for the past year? Instead of moving on and experiencing what life has to offer, I chose to slam down the brakes, jealously guarding my youth with false reassurances of putting off reality. I had continued to act as I had acted in high school: wake up, go to class, study, p-set, and fill up any left over time with extracurricular activities. The routine gave me an excuse to avoid any thoughts of the future, and the familiarity of being eternally busy let me pretend that I was just at a much more challenging high school.

In reality, while I had been content to stay stagnant, life continued on. If one refuses to yield to change, that person disrupts the flow of life until something shoves them into the stream again. I didn’t want to continue on this path, and wake up one day when I’m in my 50s and realize that I’ve completely shut out an entire aspect of life from fear.

While I understand such a change, such an acceptance, does not manifest itself within a matter of days, I think for a while now I have realized I do want to grow up, I do want to be an adult one day, and I do want to have the adventure of continuing on into the bigger world instead of wrapping myself up in the safe haven of denial. When I look back on my life, I want to know that I’ve experienced all that I can, and I want to be able to smile while reminiscing.

If I allow fear to hold me permanently in stasis, then how would this be possible?

As I sat in that spot of sunlight with my dog Maggie, allowing the rays to warm my skin, I felt a sense of utter peace and content. I let go of my worries, allowing the heat from the sun to evaporate them away to the atmosphere, and I went back inside to welcome the oncoming year.

MIND AND HEALTH

Relax your mind and focus

Stressed? Meditation can help you

By Alison Takemura

Meditation is a captivating but elusive practice, made famous for its benefits but frustrating for its intangibleness. Some describe it as not thinking about anything, but, then, what happens if you do think about something? If you admonished yourself every time a-triple-chocolate-chip-cookie craving came to mind, you’d soon grow exhausted. Others say a meditative frame of mind bids you to take the opposite approach, by making absolutely no effort to control the mind’s thoughts. For still others, meditation is intent focus on the present moment, for example, feeling the coolness of the air, and the dry crush of fallen leaves underneath one’s feet.

At its root, meditation is relaxation for the mind — a definition broad enough to encompass a spectrum of activities. Focusing attention on sensations in the present is one way; you close your eyes and breathe, noticing any sensations, but with the intention of making no judgments. A guided meditation will often prompt the meditator to focus on parts of the body as a way to release the mind from the drudgery of thought. Alternatively, meditation can also manifest as letting your mind simply be, without asking it do anything at all. “Stop thinking” is an oxymoron, isn’t it? It makes you think involuntarily. So, it’s a misconception that meditation is not thinking about anything; meditation is a state where one can observe the mind and any thoughts, but not actively pursue them. It’s OK that your mind will wander; just don’t go egging it on.

Last Thursday, I asked students in W20, “What do you think when you hear the word ‘meditation’?”

“A lot of guys sitting on the floor, wearing orange, being bald,” said Charlie Henerberry with a smile. True, the Buddhists alluded to by Henerberry are notorious meditators, sitting for hours a day in the hope of achieving enlightenment. But a 2007 survey by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) found that 9.4 percent of polled U.S. adults, representing more than 20 million people, had used meditation in the past 12 months. A group that big must contain even secular people with full mops of hair, suggesting much less lofty benefits than nirvana can be had by the practice.

Shamarah J. Hernandez ’12, looked joyful despite being weighed down by her La Verde’s groceries when she stopped to talk to me. She contemplated why she meditates — for her, a practice that constitutes taking long breaths and not thinking about anything beyond them. “During tests, or problem sets, when I feel like I don’t know what I’m doing, I breathe, [and] think things are OK,” she said. “And it takes like five seconds to quickly regain focus; [if I didn’t do it] I’d be spiraling out of control, and I think that’s how a lot of MIT students feel.”

Reasons for meditating in the MIT community aren’t limited to just high-stress situations, though; Jacky Chen G, a graduate student at Sloan, will meditate when he hasn’t slept enough the night before to gain energy, and MIT Media Lab graduate student, Elliott B. Hedman G, makes it a regular practice because of the influence it has on the quality of his life; “Meditation allows me take

a break from the swirling chaos of MIT. No matter how much stress I have because of papers, research, and deadlines, meditation is a little island where I can escape [to], and recognize what’s really important,” he said. “Because I meditate, I ... can take things in stride, and feel more fulfilled.”

Because personal accounts like these have been too tantalizing to ignore, a great deal of research has come out regarding meditation’s effects in an effort to quantify its fuzzy, feel-good benefits. Findings have substantiated what many practitioners say about meditation; it enables them to better control emotions, lower stress levels, and cultivate compassion. For example, imaging studies on Tibetan monks in 2004, done by researchers at the University Wisconsin-Madison, showed that these long-time meditators had significantly higher levels of gamma waves in the brain, which appear during heightened awareness. They were so high in fact, levels like these had never been seen outside of pathological cases. Interestingly, the levels were highest in the regions of the frontal lobes involved in modulating emotion.

A more recent study found that a kind of meditation — mindfulness-based stress reduction, or MBSR — helps produce a “cone of silence” for meditators. In 2010, a collaboration out of MIT and Harvard found that brain alpha waves, which help suppress the flow of distracting information in the brain’s prefrontal cortex, were more responsive and of greater amplitude among meditators, indicating they had increased their ability to focus.

With such positive evaluations, I wonder why I’m not tripping over meditators in the Infinite, as they listen to guided meditations on their iPods — ignoring me peacefully. But that isn’t the case; actually, many people I’ve talked to have never meditated. While some brush it off with a daub of self deprecation — “[It] sounds very interesting, but I’m not clever enough not to think,” said Chris C., MIT employee — others just aren’t sure what to think. “I don’t really know what meditating entails,” said Grace Tuyiringire ’13. “You sit silently, but I guess I don’t see why.”

On campus, though, interested students can find many resources for meditation; the Community Wellness Center has meditation drop-in sessions once a month, the Buddhist group, Prajnopaya, has meditation in the chapel once a week, and the Yoga 24x7 club meditates as a component of their weekly meeting. Classes like PE.0501, Upgrade Your Health and Happiness, teach some meditation as a stress management technique, and, finally, the Art of Living club holds a short course on meditation and yogic breathing, called Yes+, to give students a more immersive meditation experience. Matt Clarke and Henerberry are two students who might pursue such options. Clarke, spurred by his curiosity, asked the internet how to meditate when he was 18, but felt that he wasn’t getting the most he could out of it. “I would like to do more,” he said.

Henerberry was bashfully interested, too. “I would totally try it; I just don’t know how.”

Just relaxing your mind, a task so easy, can be hard at first. But MIT’s abundant resources are a great starting point to show you how.

EVENTS	JAN. 18 – JAN. 24
WEDNESDAY	
(5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.) Bang Your Head! - Heavy Metal 101 — 14N-217	
(7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.) Investigating Sherlock Holmes — 32-141	
THURSDAY	
(12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.) The Annual Hummus Taste-Off — 10-105	
(6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.) Public Art at MIT — Bartos Theatre	
FRIDAY	
(11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.) Dear Diary – Before There Were Blogs presented by MIT Archives — 14N-118	
(6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.) Hacker Movies: <i>The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo</i> and <i>Cowboy Bebop's "Jamming with Edward"</i> — E15-344	
SATURDAY	
(2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.) Association of Taiwanese Students Cooking Workshop — McCormick Dining	
(7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.) Showing of <i>De battre mon cœur s'est arrêté</i> (The Beat That My Heart Skipped) — 6-120	
SUNDAY	
(9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) 16th MIT European Career Fair — Johnson Athletics Center	
MONDAY	
(1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.) The Great Recession in Historical Perspective — E51-335	
(5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) The Internet Shouldn't Work: Networking 101 — 4-237	
TUESDAY	
(2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.) Dark Energy: The Greatest Mystery in the Universe — 37-252	
(7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.) Screening of <i>Shouting in the Dark</i> — 56-114	
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Wikipedia has gone dark today in protest of SOPA (the Stop Online Piracy Act) and PIPA (the Protect IP Act), two bills which Wikipedia states would “harm the free and open internet.” A number of other websites, including Google, Reddit, Twitter, the icanhazcheeseburger network, and many others have protests on their sites as well. Google has a large black bar over their logo, and Reddit will be down for 12 hours today. For more information on SOPA and PIPA, check their Wikipedia pages, which are the only open pages on the English version of the website today: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stop_Online_Piracy_Act.



CHRISTOPHER A. MAYNOR—THE TECH
Professor Noam Chomsky reflects upon the Arab Spring and Western foreign policy in the Middle East on Wednesday evening. The event was hosted by the MIT Presidential Fellows/Sidney Pacific Distinguished Lecture Series.




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Harbison's Sixth Symphony is indeed a highly original work; although still loosely rooted in the traditional symphonic forms, it expands brilliantly and whimsically in uncharted musical territories, while at the same time remaining an inward-bound nostalgic meditation and a sublime soul-searching journey. Elements that stand out include the use of unconventional instru-

Although not officially endorsed by the composer, Harbison's Sixth might as well be Harbison's Pastoral Symphony. The suggestion was made at the pre-concert seminar, mostly by numeral analogy with Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, known as The Pastoral. After having heard Harbison's piece though, I feel the parallel goes significantly deeper. Not only is the first movement particularly lightly orchestrated, but by use of the sung text, it paints a particularly vivid image of an ancient, south of Gaul countryside; natural elements (roses, vines, sycamores) and human elements (young women of Gaul) coexist, if only briefly, in a folkloric, almost mythical harmony. This transient, ghostly pastoral vision persists and develops throughout the other movements, aided in no small part by the use of the cimbalom, an ancient dulcimer-like instrument with strong (eastern European) folkloric overtones. Finally, throughout the piece, the harmony, although not technically tonal, tends to gravitate towards F major — the key of Beethoven's Sixth. Il-

The purely orchestral movements of the symphony follow a traditional slow-fast-alternating pattern, yet the last movement is in fact a slow movement. Unlike other Harbison symphonies, the movements are separate, and not strung together without breaks. This allows the composer to explore more poised, more deliberate endings, which are introduced every time by the unexpected and strangely foreign sound of the cimbalom. The music is indeed of symphonic proportions; every movement starts out with long, expansive lines and soon after involves the full orchestral might. Nevertheless, just as in Wright's poem, the youthful elan of the beginnings, of the past, eventually fades. The sonorous swells diminish, the rhythmic drive loses intensity and long phrases become fragmented and

January 14, 2012

Also on the program was Beethoven Piano Concerto No.1 in C major, featuring Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes. While an early Beethoven work, this concerto can dazzle at the hands of an able soloist. That was the case Saturday night, with Andsnes taking full ownership of the piece and more. His sparkling, effortless technique added spice to the repetitive scales and arpeggios of the first movement, while his soulful, lyrical playing brought intimacy to the romantic Largo. Featuring a fearless left hand technique and a compelling (yet not overbearing) stage presence, Andsnes delivered a fiery rondo, full of playful exuberance and zesty cadenzas. The orchestra kept up with Andsnes, most of the time, although at times they sounded a little too subdued. Nevertheless, this spectacular performance marked a welcome return to BSO of this early Beethoven jewel after a six-year absence.

photo credit: Vitor Pamplona

VIDEO GAME REVIEW

Adventurers, look out

Oblivion's successor is beautiful, but game glitches hurt the experience



SOURCE: ELDERSROLLS.COM/SKYRIM/

The conflict begins in *Skyrim's* live action television commercial.

By Keith Yost
STAFF WRITER

As a conservative, I'm always a little bit wary when it comes to video game storytelling. Game development studios, if you ask me, have a decidedly liberal bias. Whether the game is *BioShock*, with its aggressive assault on the ideology of Ayn Rand, or *Grand Theft Auto IV*, with its skeptical look at the American dream, I worry that somewhere out there, sneaky left-wingers are using my recreational time to brainwash me in their ways.

Bethesda Softworks is no exception. In my play through of *Fallout 3: New Vegas*, I did not, as I had hoped, play as a noble individualist spreading democracy and free markets in my wake. Instead, I played as a thuggish sociopath, whose first instinct upon contact with fellow human beings was to bludgeon them to death with the nearest club and loot them of the clothes off their backs. By the end of the game it was clear — if granted any freedoms or human rights, I would use them to bash and plunder my fellow man without mercy. I could only have two ends: either squeezed beneath the thumb of a ruthless tyrant, or the dictator of all before me. My very existence was a damning indictment of democracy as a form of government.

It was with some surprise therefore, that I found Bethesda's latest release, *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, to be, if anything, a right-leaning game. The game's pseudo-racist, religious hillbillies were not depicted as opponents of my right to gay marriage or somesuch — instead, they were fighting for my freedom against the impositions of an elitist group of carpetbaggers. Animal rights groups were nonexistent — on the contrary, I was encouraged to spend much of the game

exterminating the land of its natural fauna and was rewarded for doing so. The government of this beautiful land was libertarian, providing only what was necessary to maintain law and order and keep its citizens safe from external threat. It was a paradise.

Besides the game's satisfying policy positions, *Skyrim* has many other considerable strengths. In no particular order:

The game is downright beautiful. It is visually stunning on a level that surpasses anything the Xbox 360 has seen to date. Just the opportunity to wander the epic mountain terrain of Skyrim was worth a solid \$10 of the game's \$60 asking price.

What Skyrim works so hard to achieve in terms of game immersion, it squanders with software glitches.

Skyrim has made solid improvements to two areas that were woefully lacking in its previous *Elder Scrolls* titles, namely the voice acting and user interface. I spent much of *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* fumbling through my inventory for items and cursing the repetitive ramblings of the game's NPCs. In *Skyrim*, the inventory system worked smoothly and I found every bit of the game's dialogue enjoyable.

The storytelling is of very high quality. Any one of the game's side plots could have been the main plot of a lesser game. And for those who want it, *Skyrim* has sprinkled

backstory and lore throughout the world, waiting for adventurers to seek it out.

The gameplay is first rate. Melee combat, ranged combat, and spell casting are all viscerally satisfying, and there is enough tactical challenge to make combat exciting.

Together, the success of all of these elements results in a game that draws the player in and makes the world feel real. My favorite moment was a point, maybe six hours in, where I found myself cautiously hiking through the untamed wilderness of Skyrim toward a distant town, eyes glued to the screen and ears perked for a hint of threats. It is rare for a video game to draw me in so completely that I forget I am playing a game, but Skyrim did it — for 30 minutes or so, as I sat on a couch in the middle of a large urban metropolis, and lived with the very real fear of being eaten by a grizzly bear.

With that said, *Skyrim* has significant flaws that should deny it the distinction of being the game of the year or some similar title. The first and foremost are the game's frequent, and often game-breaking bugs.

What *Skyrim* works so hard to achieve in terms of game immersion, it squanders with software glitches. Frequently during my playthrough, the game would freeze and force me to reset my console. In addition, some sort of scripting error caused the in-game final battle cinematic to break. I finally quit playing for good when, at the end of a long dungeon crawl, my final objective glitched into the floor, and could not be recovered — the quest became impossible to complete without sacrificing hours of unsaved gameplay.

The second problem that makes it difficult to stay immersed in the game is its difficulty curve. Rather than get harder as the game progresses, it tends to become easier

— at level nine, every fight felt like an epic battle won only by the skin of my teeth. At level 39, I could zip around dungeons with near impunity, stopping only to loot trinkets from those slain by my summoned minions. By the end, fighting a world-devouring dragon felt several times easier than killing my first troll, and not nearly as immersive.

Also frustrating is the rather linear nature of the game. Linear is a hard label to apply to a game like *Skyrim*, which allows you to pursue any mission you like at any time, but I still believe the charge has merit. Decisions within games are often criticized for being nothing but a choice between moral extremes — you can rescue the kittens stuck in a tree or burn the tree to the ground, but there is no middle road to pursue. *Skyrim* avoids this convention by denying the player much choice at all — most of the major quest lines are strictly linear progressions, with perhaps one choice of outcomes at the very end. *Skyrim's* storytelling is a step forward for the game's industry, but the degree of agency that it gives the player is a step backward.

Lastly (and leastly), the gameplay feels imbalanced. Players who play as fighters are likely to have a much easier time of things than mages or thieves. In and of itself, it's not a terribly significant problem for the game, considering that all three paths are fun to play. But, it does make the serious problems with the game's difficulty curve even more critical.

All in all, *Skyrim* gets an 8.5 out of 10. It is a game with some significant flaws and a good deal of wasted potential, but otherwise is very well executed. Even gamers not particularly enamored with the fantasy RPG genre should feel comfortable buying this game when it reaches the \$30-\$40 price range.



SOURCE: ELDERSROLLS.COM/SKYRIM/

The mountain terrain in *Skyrim* makes for stunning visuals.

